| **CESAER Task Force Human Resources** |

Leadership and leadership development in academia

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Foreword

This report is a compilation of the responses from 8 universities in CESAER task force HR that replied to a questionnaire on current status of leadership and leadership development at their universities in the autumn of 2013: RWTH Aachen, Aalto University, Chalmers, TU Delft, INSA Lyon, TU Porto, TU Wien and ETH Zürich.

Added to those responses are the outcomes of a workshop with participants representing both HR and faculty in 16 European universities of science and technology from 11 countries during the CESAER HR Conference in May 2014. The workshop was an attempt to gather the collective competence in the group around the topic "Where do we want to be regarding leadership in academia in 10 years from now".

On leadership

Leadership in academia is defined very similar to the definition of leadership in business settings: inspiring others, being a role model, being self-aware and self-reflective as well as being decisive, visionary, planning ahead and handling the finances. In summary leadership is described as the ability "to enable the success of other people".

Additionally, some universities mention the need to lead people acting in very many different roles; teaching, supervising, performing research, innovating and disseminating ideas within a tight framework and competitive setting.

There are varying views on the differences between management and leadership. In general we see a shift in focus from management, as in dealing with administration and decisions, structures and processes, to leadership where dealing with people and relationships is more important, notably coaching employees, giving feedback, and building teams. There is a need for both perspectives, and the ability to act in both is vital also in academia.

The notion of academic leadership is discussed at the universities, with an expressed need to define it clearer. In order to define where we want to be regarding leadership in academia in the future, we need to start by defining a strategy for where we want the universities to be from a larger perspective, i.e. the role of the universities in society. Only then can we define the leadership required to get us there.

It is clear that there is not one common starting point as we face great national differences regarding preconditions for leadership, such as the degree of autonomy of the universities and level of leadership maturity of leaders. Nevertheless, it is a common perception that universities need to invest in leadership and leadership development. Many challenges are shared between universities, see the headings below for further details.

Sharing experiences and best-practices is needed and appreciated by HR practitioners as well as faculty. Some examples of best practices shared are included in this report.

Aalto University Leadership Principles

ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL:
Invole people in implementation of strategy

ACADEMIC FREEDOM:
Enable academic freedom and innovative working environment

RULES FOR WORKING TOGETHER:
Ensure shared rules for working together are followed

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL:
Support learning and wel-bein at individual and team level

Existing best practice example 1:
Aalto University's leadership principles.

Leadership challenges in academia

Leadership in academia is sometimes a matter of leading independent researchers who do not want to be lead. There is scepticism towards leadership as a competency and why money is being spent on leadership development rather than on research.

Leadership roles are sometimes perceived as a burden which needs to be carried by someone, and can be perceived as a threat of ruining a research career if too much of the individual's time is spent on leadership rather than on research.

Combining the roles of subject matter expert and leader in one person, and finding the balance between these roles seems to be a challenge for many leaders in academia. Some leaders express fear of showing their weaknesses. This may hamper the ability and willingness to develop leadership skills.

Expectations on leaders today are increasing throughout society. In academia, students and employees expect more active forms of leadership such as coaching and mentoring.

This requires a different type of leadership that is less hierarchical and more team oriented than traditional leadership. Still the leader should be the subject expert and role model. These challenges are expressed by many universities and especially so by ETH.

A question raised is whether there are dissimilar requirements for leading academic staff and support staff. Furthermore the perception of status difference between faculty and support staff is a challenge, where faculty have higher status than support staff; can a good leader bridge that difference?

There are also challenges described in the survey results related to achieving the "right" values and behaviours, like creating an environment of trust, collaboration and creating common goals.

4 rooms of leadership

Leading a formal organisation:
Being the employer, manager, and the person responsible for staff, finance, premises, work environment, etc.

Interdisciplinary and network leadership
To be in charge of conceptual coherence, create identity and lead with the focus on a bigger idea than one's own subject.

Leading an area of knowledge
To maintain and develop competence and deploy one's discoveries in the scientific field, participate in knowledge creation and conveyance, build your own, independent research environment

Leading in an education environment
To carry and represent the program's idea, to create meaning, identity and culture around the subject and around young people's professional role and career dreams.

Existing best practice example 2:
Chalmers University of Technology's leadership model. Read more at Chalmers intranet.

Appointing leaders in academia

There is a common perception that a period as department head or dean is like doing compulsory military service, someone has to do it and senior members of the faculty should take turns. This attitude may have negative consequences regarding the ability to take necessary but unpopular decisions. On the other hand it is also perceived as an entitlement to have the opportunity of a higher leadership position for a limited period of time. This construction tends to conserve the existing system, hindering long term development of leaders, and the recruitment of leaders from outside academia.

Traditionally leaders, such as department heads and deans, are appointed mainly on academic merits, whereas leadership capabilities are less considered. However, there seems to be a slight change in mind-set towards taking leadership skills into account to a higher degree and that managers may also come from leadership backgrounds outside academia. This phenomenon might mean that leadership positions need to be on a more permanent basis than a three to six year appointment as traditional.

Gender and diversity aspects are generally not taken into account explicitly when appointing leaders. There seems to be a common awareness of avoiding evaluation criteria that might discriminate one sex, although there are also universities that dedicate a number of positions exclusively to women.

A majority of universities announce their leadership positions publicly. Some differentiate in the way that higher leadership positions are announced externally, whereas lower positions are announced only internally. There are also examples where leaders are elected or just picked among the faculty members.

Evaluation criteria are generally defined and set out beforehand and communicated in the announcements. Typically, there are criteria on research and educational merits,

and gradually to an increasing extent on managerial and organizational skills. Some universities use external recruitment firms to support to identify the right candidates in the search process for leadership appointments.

HR functions are not always involved in the recruitment process, although we see a need for HR expertise, especially if personal and interpersonal competencies are to be evaluated as part of the criteria for a position.

Existing best practice example 3:
To identify future leaders at TU Delft, HR and Rector Magnificus monitor how people operate, ask them to be a member of an important committee, invite them to give a presentation in faculty meetings, and see how they present themselves. In addition HR and Rector Magnificus talk about what they expect from academic leaders and compare with the performance of the academics.

Existing best practice example 4:
At Chalmers, a leadership portfolio is currently being developed to be used in the recruitment of leaders at all levels. The portfolio outlines the university's leadership criteria and expectations on leaders and is intended to bring a stronger focus on leadership aspects when evaluating candidates for a leadership position.

The challenge to combine part time management with excellence in research, in addition to the perception that first line management in academia is sometimes not considered a strong merit, implies that promising candidates might not be interested in becoming leaders and the "second best" person gets the position.

Some universities mention the need to cater for real career prospects for leaders, as a way of making leadership competency more valued, and attract leadership potential.

Developing and monitoring leadership in academia

Most universities offer some form of structured leadership and management training run in-house. The most common set-up is to have a set of basic management trainings, for instance conflict management, recruiting, goal setting and conducting performance reviews.

Existing best practice example 5:
RWTH University Aachen has defined eight fields of action:

- Strengthen leadership skills

- Enhance teaching competency

- Promote capacity for innovation and research

- Build a sense of community and "We-Feeling"

- Promote commitment to performance

- Promote personal development

- Strengthen equality and diversity

- Promote internationalization

There is consensus on the need to begin leadership development efforts at an early stage of the academic career, i.e. at post-doc or assistant professor level. Although they may not be in a formal management position, most faculty members are leaders in one aspect or another. The role of supervisor is often the first type of leadership the young researcher meets.

We could make use of and recognise existing expertise in leadership, letting experienced leaders mentor younger leaders in the organisation. Especially for young researchers participating in networks with leaders within and outside of academia would give a good platform for understanding leadership.

Worth mentioning is the need for self-awareness and ability to lead oneself. Personal and leadership development needs to be ongoing, at all levels of leadership. Even the top management team will benefit from coaching, feed-back and similar initiatives.

A smaller number of universities describe longer programmes (8-10 days) for newly appointed managers/leaders and some have programmes tailored per target group, for instance first line managers, assistant professors, full professors, etc. Some also offer individual support such as coaching and mentoring, as well as process based development, i.e. interventions/mediations in leadership teams and other teams, working on their daily issues focusing on learning, collaboration and communication.

Development trainings and programmes are in themselves not a guarantee for good leadership, there must also be a willingness to understand, change of behaviours, and improved self-awareness among the leaders. The level of leadership proficiency in the organisation cannot be monitored based only on the number of programmes attended, but rather through measuring the actual behaviours.

There are various ways to monitor leadership behaviours, including work climate analysis, employee surveys, 360° tools and performance reviews. At the responding universities appraisal dialogues and employee surveys seem to be the most common ways of collecting information, in addition to the everyday, continuous dialogue between the leader and subordinates. A few universities offer their leaders the opportunity to receive feedback though a 360° tool, either as part of a specific development programme or on demand. The 360° tool is then used to support individual development rather than for monitoring leadership performance.

A few universities do not yet have a structured process for monitoring leadership. Some of them express that they wish to develop in that area in the future. Some say that the academic community would hardly accept HR tools at all.

Some universities have defined criteria for good leadership, for instance Chalmers. At Chalmers leaders should have a high level of self-awareness and the ability to:

- create visions, strategies and goals
- recognise and utilise diversity
- ensure that the main stakeholders in the operation collaborate in order to achieve stated goals
- develop employees' competencies and build competent and highly effective teams
- delegate
- make decisions and handle conflicts
- be courageous, take risks and break patterns
- listen actively, be responsive and create beneficial dialogues
- encourage reflection and learning
- provide feedback

The leadership criteria should be used while appointing leaders, as a topic for evaluation and dialogue during the performance appraisal and as a basis for 360° feedback.

Developing academic leadership

ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

Networking → Dialogue

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

New approaches and experiences ← Reflection
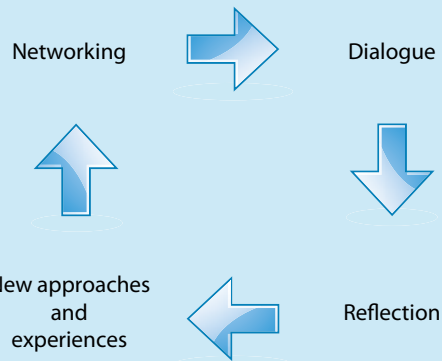
Existing best practice example 6:
The most extensive development programme for leaders is shared by Aalto University, both when it comes to the model for learning on an individual level and an organizational level, and how they combine.

Leadership Development Framework
Support to everyday leadership & development of new competences

Strategic Leadership

- Recommended external programs
- Executive coaching and mentoring
- Strategic Leader programme
- Management Team development support
- Aalto Leader's dialogue

Academic Leadership

- Tenure Track support
- Support to pedagocial leadership
- Future Research Leader's programme

Service Leadership

- Service Leader programme
- Allto Service Leader's Dialogue

Project Leadership

- Research funding and project management practices
- Leading inernational Research Projects programme
- Project management and leadership programme

Leading people and teams

- Team development support
- Aalto people processes and tools: resources, development, rewarding, well-being and change
- Mentoring
- Coaching
- 360° Assessment and Individual Development Planning
- Aalto Leadership Development programme & group coaching

Existing best practice example 7:
Aalto's offering of development activities to their leaders.

Moving in and out of leadership roles

Leaders who have left a purely academic role to take up leadership positions sometimes find it challenging to return back to their academic role. After having spent a couple of years with most of their time on leadership tasks, they might no longer be up to date with the developments in their own research area. For that reason, some universities offer academic leaders an opportunity for a paid sabbatical period.

Example 8:
At TU Wien ex-leaders sometimes get a "free" semester when they do not teach in order to focus on their research.

Other universities have observed a certain internal rotation between senior leadership roles, such as executive board, board, or head of department. The university may then benefit from a leader's gained experience in one role by appointing her/him to another leadership role.

Others again have no process in place for helping ex-leaders to return to an academic role.

There is also an outspoken wish from both universities and industry for increased inter-sector mobility, i.e. faculty being mobile to a sector outside academia. This might increase the leadership maturity of the academic leaders, returning from sectors and contexts where they have been inspired by different practices.

Experience from other sectors is not encouraged actively at many universities; non-academic work such as industrial experiences and leadership merits are not highly valued towards higher positions in academia.

Conclusions and recommendations

On behalf of the CESAER universities, the Taskforce HR recommends the management teams/executive boards at all European universities to strive towards providing good conditions and support for management and leadership in academia. In practice this involves areas such as allocating time for leadership, limiting the number of team members reporting to the manager, clearly defining roles of and expectations on leaders, and utilising HR competence and tools as a strategic resource in this work.

To have a role model and ambassador for leadership in academia in the high level management of the university may enhance the speed of leadership development within the university and academic world. There needs to be a clear expectance of good leadership, while role-modelling that leadership. Academia is a competitive environment, and a good leader may for instance facilitate change from a culture dominated by a cult of personality towards a culture where team success is rewarded.

There is an outspoken wish for increased inter-sector mobility, which needs to be encouraged in a more structured manner, for instance in career systems.

We recommend striving for a situation where leaders are appointed after a regular application and selection process, based on academic, pedagogical and leadership skills as well as personal traits, where HR expertise is utilised in the process.

Defining and investing in leadership may be a key for releasing creativity, innovativeness and efficiency at the universities. We believe that good leaders who make sure that resources are used in an optimal way, delegate, motivate, translate visions into action, who gain pride, trust and feelings of well-being, will increase the performance of the university.

There are many good practices ongoing in the area of supporting management and leadership that may inspire other universities. The general willingness to share experiences and knowledge within the university community is high (as opposed to commercial companies). This is a resource we should make use of!

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